

Testimony of Dana Smith
March 9, 2012 – Judiciary Committee
In support of House Bill 5388, providing
Funding for Legal Services

I am writing this letter in response to the New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc. request for additional funding in order to continue to provide services, for people such as myself that simply cannot afford to retain an attorney:

This is my story-

My name is Dana Smith; I am a divorced single parent of two. My problem started in September of 2011 regarding a heating situation in our home. The property, I reside in, went into foreclosure and was taken over by Fannie Mae. The contractor's that are responsible for maintaining the property did nothing to ensure that my family had heat for the coming winter. I am a renter and also a holder of a Section 8 voucher. While Section 8 advised the contractor of the various violations, still nothing was done to correct the problem. Frustrated, because my request for service was simply ignored, I went to the New Haven Legal Assistance, to request their assistance in January 2012 because I still had no working heat in my apt.

The staff in this office immediately took my information and assigned me to an Attorney, Amy Eppler Epstein, who promptly got in touch with me regarding my concerns.

I am happy to say that my issues have been resolved, all because of their efforts to ensure that people such as myself are not taken advantage of by the big corporations who are buying up the foreclosed properties with no concern for the tenants who reside in them.

Therefore, it is in my opinion given the condition of our economy, to reduce funding to the very people who fight for the underdogs would do our community a dis service. What the Legal Assistance Association provides for a community is a piece of mind, a sense of security when all else has failed.

Thank you for your time